

Commissioner for Patents
Washington, D.C. 20231

PRELIMINARY AMENDMENT

Prior to examination, please ~~amend~~ the application as follows:

In the Specification:

On page 1, line 6, after "This application"; please insert -- is a continuation application of U.S. Patent Application Serial Number 09/387,467, filed September 1, 1999, which--.

In the Claims:

Please cancel claims 1-47 without prejudice.

Please add new claims 48-62 as follows.

--48. A method for determining the predisposition of a rheumatoid arthritis patient to develop severe disease, said method comprising:

a) comparing the frequency of CD4⁺/CD28^{null} cells in said patient to a reference frequency to obtain information about said rheumatoid arthritis condition, and

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